

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 083982
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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T STATE 083982

EXDIS

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TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, LE, IS, XF, UNSC

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON--U.S./SYRIAN DISCUSSION

REF: DAMASCUS 1788

1. USUN AND JERUSALEM SHOULD INFORM URUQHART AND SIILASVUO
OF AMBASSADOR MURPHY'S TALK MARCH 30 WITH ASSAD REGARDING
LEBANON. IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR TO EACH THAT WE ARE

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PAGE 02 STATE 083982

CONVEYING THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS TALK IN BOTH NEW YORK AND
JERUSALEM. MURPHY'S PRIME PURPOSE IN THIS MEETING WAS TO
DELIVER PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE ABOUT MIDDLE EAST, BUT HE WAS
UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITY TO SOUND OUT
SYRIAN ATTITUDES RE SOUTH LEBANON, TO PRESS FOR SYRIAN
PRESSURES ON THE PALESTINIANS AND SYRIAN INTERDICTION OF
REINFORCEMENTS, AND TO ASK QUESTIONS ON HOW TYRE AND NO-

MAN'S-LAND PROBLEMS SHOULD BE HANDLED.

2. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- ASSAD HOPES FOR THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE RESTORATION OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN SOUTH LEBANON. RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, HOWEVER, IS THE MOST URGENT REQUIREMENT. HE NOTED THAT HIS OWN INFORMATION DID NOT SQUARE WITH OURS THAT THE ISRAELI FORCES WERE THINNING OUT.

-- MURPHY WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO PRESS HARD FOR A SYRIAN MOVE INTO NO-MAN'S-LAND BELOW THE RED LINE BUT INSTEAD TO SET THE STAGE FOR FUTURE, FIRMER DEMARCHES.

-- ASSAD REACTED RATHER NEGATIVELY TO MURPHY'S PROPOSAL THAT HE KEEP THIS CONCEPT UNDER REVIEW BUT IT WAS NONE-THELESS SIGNIFICANT THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT EXPLICITLY RULE OUT EXTENSION OF ADF CONTROL INTO THIS AREA.

-- ASSAD SAID THAT STABILITY IN NO-MAN'S-LAND SHOULD BE ASSURED BY APPLICATION OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LEBANON AND PALESTINIANS, AND HE MEANT BY THIS BOTH THE CAIRO AND SHTAURA AGREEMENTS (WE WILL BE ANALYZING WHETHER THESE AGREEMENTS, PARTICULARLY SHTAURA, MIGHT OFFER THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SOME LEVERAGE, ALTHOUGH WE ARE DOUBTFUL, AND WILL TRY TO SHARE VIEWS WITH ADDRESSEES
SECRET

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PAGE 03 STATE 083982

LATER).

-- ASSAD PROFESSED TO BE UNINFORMED OF THE SITUATION IN TYRE. HE SAID HE FELT UNIFIL COULD WORK OUT AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PALESTINIANS REGARDING TYRE. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE LEADERS OF THE MAJOR PALESTINIAN GROUPS HAD DECIDED TO COOPERATE WITH THE CEASE-FIRE AND UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO DENY ISRAEL A A PRETEXT TO DELAY WITHDRAWAL.

-- ASSAD REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON THE SENSITIVE TOPIC OF SYRIAN PRESSURES ON THE PALESTINIANS. HE ASSERTED THAT THE LIKELIHOOD THAT UNCONTROLLED INDIVIDUAL PALESTINIANS WILL LAUNCH ROCKETS AGAINST ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE USED TO JUSTIFY FURTHER AGGRESSION.

3. USUN AND JERUSALEM SHOULD SHARE OUR VIEW THAT ASSAD'S RESPONSES TO MURPHY'S PROBES AND SUGGESTIONS WERE CHARACTERISTIC. HE PLAYS HIS CARDS CLOSE TO HIS VEST. TAKING ASSAD'S RESPONSES IN CONJUNCTION WITH KHADDAM'S EARLIER COMMENTS TO MURPHY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SYRIANS MIGHT BE ABLE TO APPLY MORE EFFECTIVE PRESSURES ON LEBANON'S

BEHALF AFTER RPT AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, WE BELEIVE WE
SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED. IF THE ISRAELIS CAN BE
PERSUADED (SEPTTEL) TO PROVIDE EVEN A TENTATIVE WITHDRAWAL
SCHEDULE, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR SIILASVUO TO RETURN
TO DAMASCUS TO NUDGE THE SYRIANS FURTHER ALONG THE
ROAD WE WANT THEM TO TAKE. COOPER

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